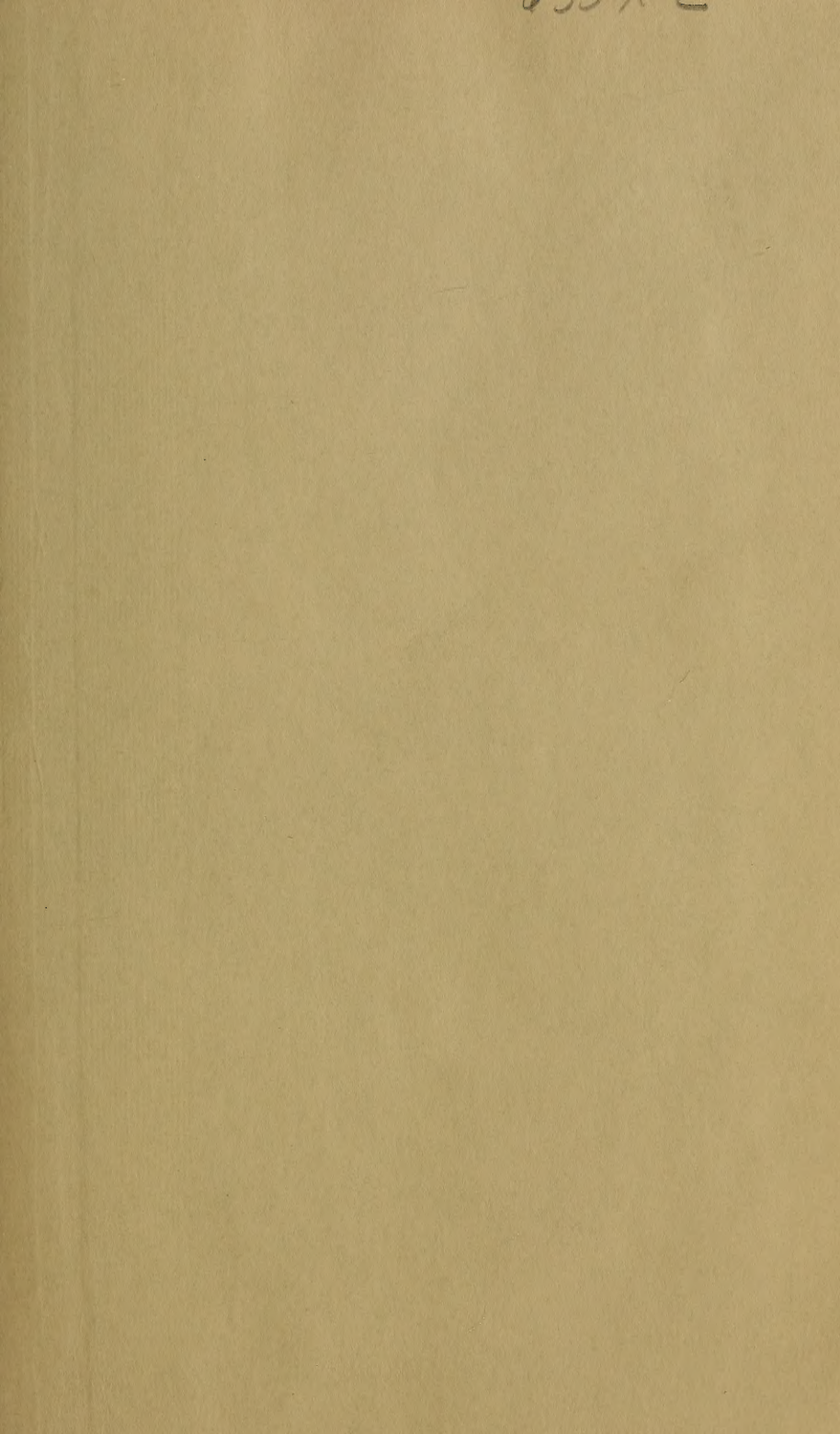


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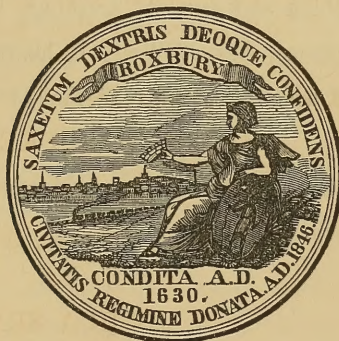
OF

WILLIAM ELLISON, ESQ.,

BEFORE THE

Common Council of the City of Roxbury,

DECEMBER 31, 1855.



ROXBURY:
PRINTED FOR THE CITY COUNCIL.
1855.

THE COMMON COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROXBURY for the year 1855, held their last session on Monday evening, Dec. 31. After the business of the evening had been disposed of, Henry P. Shed, Esq. of Ward 5, rose and offered the following resolution :

Resolved, That the thanks of this Council be extended to WILLIAM ELLISON, ESQ., for the able, impartial and dignified manner in which he has, during our sessions of the past year, discharged his duties as President of the Council.

Remarks of an eloquent and appropriate character were made by Jos. W. Robbins and Jas. W. Cushing, Esqs. of Ward 5, and Franklin Williams, Esq. of Ward 1, heartily endorsing the resolution ; after which the vote of thanks was unanimously passed.

The President of the Council then addressed the members in the following speech.

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE COMMON COUNCIL,—

I HARDLY dare trust myself to the task of an extemporaneous reply to the personal, but undeserved compliment contained in the resolution you have this moment so unanimously passed. My own full heart, full at this moment to overflowing, would prompt me to cull the choicest flowers of language and of eloquence, had I the power, and present them a free-will offering for your kind acceptance. But do we not all know, Gentlemen, how poorly eloquence of words translates the gratitude of those inward emotions, which, like some pent up Utica, seem confined within us. Your own kindly feelings I know will prompt you to accept an unstudied reply that comes warm and gushing from the inward man.

Gentlemen, we have been associated together, for the year that is just expiring, in our capacity as legislators for this goodly City of Roxbury ; but a few sands are yet to fall and the present City Government will have passed into history. I trust that we may all of us be enabled to look back upon that page of the past, that records our official acts, with that inward satisfaction that arises from the consciousness of having done our duty, and of having employed our talent for the benefit and the welfare of an enlightened constituency.

Gentlemen, our labors here have in truth and in deed been labors of love. Within this pleasant circle we have passed many social and agreeable evenings, cultivating the friendship and respect and esteem of each other. Now where so much harmony and good feeling has always prevailed, our official actions cannot be otherwise than acceptable and profitable to our constituents. Gentlemen, the present City Government has been largely indoctrinated with the spirit of Young America. It has pushed from their stools the ghosts of old antecedents, and has infused a reform element into the political history of Roxbury that our successors need not fear to encounter.

The improvements that have been made around us, are of such a character that no citizen need ask to have them pointed out. They are seen and known and recognized by every one who walks the streets of our fair city. They present themselves in widened thoroughfares and well laid sidewalks; and over the Egyptian darkness that has always hung like a midnight pall over the city, we have now well-lighted streets, cheering the pedestrian whose business or whose pleasure prevents him from an early return to his home.

I think, Gentlemen, it may very properly be said of a well-lighted city, that it "hangs upon the cheek of night, like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear." But, Gentlemen, we cannot but be admonished by the political separation which is soon to part us, that a new administration is soon to occupy the positions we now occupy. To that new administration let us, like good citizens, extend the right hand of fellowship and bid them God speed in all their efforts to advance the welfare and prosperity of our common interests. These political changes cannot but bring forcibly to our minds that important and wholesome truth, that the rulers and the ruled are separated only by temporary barriers.

The recent municipal elections, both in this city and in our neighboring City of Boston, have failed to shake my confidence in the ultimate triumph of a true Americanism. The platform of 1844, that platform upon which my first political American offering was laid, had but two planks,—an extension of the naturalization laws of the United States, and the national doctrine that none but Americans should rule America. That platform is broad enough and national enough, at the present day, to uphold every true hearted American, who is willing “to march under the flag and keep step to the music of the Union.” I have a strong and an abiding faith and belief, that the American party is yet destined to act an important *national part* in the administration of *national affairs*. Until that, no distant day, let us, as a party, be content to “wait for the wagon,” and in the meantime let us burnish yet brighter our armor for the great national political conflict in which we are to engage.

But, Gentlemen, permit me, at the risk of still trespassing upon your indulgence, to make a few brief remarks more personal to myself and to you. My labors in this exalted and important position, from which I am about to retire, have been made pleasant and easy and agreeable, by your unvarying kindness and indulgence to any errors of judgment I may have committed, or to any short comings in wisdom and ability ; and if, in retiring from this chair, I may be allowed to put off the harness of office, without leaving behind me any of those unpleasant remembrances that service in official capacity so often engenders, I shall be more than amply compensated for any personal sacrifices that I may have been called upon to make.

But, Gentlemen, allow me to assure you that all your manifold acts of kindness are registered upon that “tablet of memory where every day I shall turn the leaf to read the account.”

Amid the shifting scenes and uncertainties of life, it could hardly be expected that even our little circle should be entirely exempt during the past year from the common lot of mortality ; but by the blessings and the bounty of a Divine Providence, we, who entered upon our political labors at the commencement of the present year, are now found at its close in the enjoyment of apparent good health, if not all of us in the enjoyment of prosperity. To that Giver of every good gift, who watches over governments as well as individuals, let us return our silent, but sincere and heartfelt thanks, and may we all be so prepared, that “ when our summons comes to join the innumerable caravan, that moves to that mysterious realm, where each shall take his chamber in the silent halls of death, that we go not like the quarry slave at night, scourged to his dungeon, but sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust, may we approach the grave like one who wraps the drapery of his couch about him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

Gentlemen, allow me to tender to you my best wishes for your individual happiness and prosperity.

